

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SY-03 USSS-00 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06

CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 NSC-07

SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PRS-01 PA-04

NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-20 L-03 PC-04 SCS-03 SCA-01 DRC-01

/120 W

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O R 091408Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8422

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

CSAF/XOXXGIF

COMIDEASTFOR

USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3946

E. O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR ET US

SUBJ: ELF ATTACK ON STONEHOUSE

REF: ASMARA 236 (NOTAL) ADDIS 3918 NOTAL)

THERE FOLLOW SOME ADDITIONAL FACTS ON ATTACK, TOGETHER WITH
EMBASSY'S INITIAL OBSERVATIONS:

1. FACTS: ROCKET APPARENTLY FIRED FROM TREELINE SOME 150 YARDS
OUTSIDE FENCE SURROUNDING STONEHOUSE. IT PROBABLY HANDHELD/
SHOULDER-FIRED VIEW ABSENCE BURN MARKS ON GROUND OR VEGETATION.
CARTRIDGE CASINGS FOUND AT TWO SITES, SUGGESTING PERSON WHO
FIRED ROCKET BEING ASSISTED BY OTHERS AND SMALL ARMS COVERING
FIRE PROVIDED. FIXED SITE COMMANDO POLICE POST IN VICINITY
REMAINED PASSIVE. ATTACK OCCURRED WHILE STONEHOUSE GUARD
CHANGING. THIS FORTUNATE AS SHRAPNEL WOULD OTHERWISE ALMOST
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CERTAINLY HAVE CAUSED CASUALTIES. SHRAPNEL CUT WIRES FROM

ANTENNA AND ONE OF THEM IS DOWN. REMNANTS OF ORDNANCE BEING RECOVERED AND WILL BE FORWARDED.

2. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS: ALL INDICATORS AVAILABLE TO US UP TO THIS POINT, NOT EXCLUDING ELF'S REPORTED WILLINGNESS NEGOTIATE WITH IEG RELEASE OF TENNECO 5, HAD SUGGESTED THAT BOTH GENERAL COMMAND FACTION AND POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT FACTION OF INSURGENCY REMAINED COMMITTED TO POLICY OF NOT RPT NOT STRIKING AMERICAN TARGETS. THIS POLICY COULD HAVE CHANGED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN CONNECTION CONTINUING US PHASE-DOWN AND RELATED ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS. IT ALSO POSSIBLE THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH MORE RADICAL GROUP, PERHAPS ONE INTRODUCED FROM PERIPHERAL AREAS IN WHICH TRAINING OF SUCH GROUPS KNOWN TO BE IN COURSE. IF POLICY HAS CHANGED, OR HYPOTHESIS OF MORE MILITANT GROUP IS CORRECT, FURTHER ATTACKS SEEM PROBABLE. IF NONE OCCUR, WE MAY BE FACED ONLY WITH PUBLICITY SPECTACULAR, IN WHICH CASE TIMING OF ATTACK BETWEEN PRESUMABLY KNOWN SHIFTS BECOMES INDICATIVE OF CONTINUING DESIRE TO AVOID SHEDDING AMERICAN BLOOD.

3. FOR PRESENT WE ARE COMPELLED ASSUME WORST AND TAKE SUCH COUNTER-MEASURES AS ARE WITHIN OUR REACH (BELOW). WORST CASE ASSUMPTION REQUIRES US CONSIDER POSSIBILITY THAT CONGEN, MAC AIRCRAFT, US SHIPS CALLING AT ERITREA PORTS, ETC., MIGHT RPT MIGHT ALL BECOME TARGETS.

4. TIGHTER SECURITY FOR USG PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS THUS BECOMES OUR MAJOR NEAR-TERM PREOCCUPATION UNTIL EVENTS PERMIT US DISCARD WORST CASE HYPOTHESIS.

5. ACTIONS: KAGNEW, CONGEN ASMARA AND ALL OTHER US PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS ARE BEING ADVISED TAKE ALL STEPS ENHANCE THEIR SECURITY. IN BOTH ASMARA AND ADDIS ABABA WE WILL URGE APPROPRIATE IEG AUTHORITIES DO UTMOST ENHANCE SECURITY OUR PEOPLE, FACILITIES AND TRANSITING VESSELS/AIRCRAFT.

6. COMMENT: KAGNEW'S VULNERABILITY WELL KNOWN TO DEPARTMENT. MEASURES WE CAN TAKE EVEN IF IEG COOPERATES FULLY ONLY ABLE LIMIT THIS VULNERABILITY TO DEGREE. IN ETHIOPIA'S CURRENT POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, MOREOVER, CAPACITY IEG TO BE HELPFUL
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PROBABLY LESS THAN OPTIMUM. IT TOO EARLY AS YET OFFER EVALUATION, IN LIGHT THIS INCIDENT, OF IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ERITREA. WYMAN

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